

Philadelphia VAMC/116A
University & Woodland Avenues
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Editor: Katy Ruckdeschel, Ph.D.
Phone: 215-823-5957
Fax: 215-823-4123

www.va.gov/visn4mirecc

Upcoming Events, continued

(Continued from page 1)

plete the training will be eligible to apply for a waiver that allows them to prescribe opiate agonists for the treatment of opioid dependence. More information will follow via email.

This summer we will offer a 2-hour v-tel presentation on motivational interviewing. Three certified trainers, Joseph Conigliaro, M.D., Peter Gariti, Ph.D., and Deborah Van Horn, Ph.D., will describe the intervention, provide data on its efficacy, and instruct participants in the process for tailoring future on-site training at each VISN 4 medical center. The next step in this process will be a workshop for spoke site staff, who will be guided in developing a plan for the specific focus of further training at their site (e.g., clinical setting, population to target, etc.). For the final step, the MIRECC will coordinate on-site, targeted training at each VISN 4 medical center. Stay tuned for further information.

Congratulations!

To MIRECC investigator **Dave Oslin, M.D.**, honored by the American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry (AAGP) at its 17th Annual Meeting on February 21, with its 2004 **Junior Investigator Award**.

The Junior Investigator Award is given in recognition of the best, unpublished original research by an emerging leader in the research field. Dr. Oslin was selected by the AAGP's Research Committee for his paper, "The Treatment of Late Life Depression Complicated by Alcohol Dependence." The study examines the effects of combining treatments for alcohol abuse with treatments for depression to develop improved methods for helping patients who suffer from both.

Coming Soon...

Homelessness and SMI:
From the Streets to Recovery
(collaboration with VISNs 3, and 5)
April 27-28, 2004
Trump Plaza, Atlantic City, NJ

Neuropsychiatric Aspects of
Parkinson's Disease
(collaboration with PADRECC)
May 24, 2004
Inn at Penn, Philadelphia, PA

Office-Based Treatment of
Opioid Dependence
May 2004
Pittsburgh VAMC
June 2004
Philadelphia VAMC

Motivational Interviewing
Summer 2004

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MIRECC Messenger

VISN 4 Stars and Stripes Network



Home First Enrolls First Veteran in Philadelphia

Michael G. went home today, after spending almost three out of the past four years in Philadelphia homeless shelters. A veteran, he is the first participant in Philadelphia's "Home First" program, a new initiative from the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) that represents a joint funding effort of the U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Health and Human Services. In October 2003, the City of Philadelphia, heading up the Home First team, was awarded \$3.3 million from the ICH to provide permanent rental housing with intensive supportive services for the chronically homeless.



Michael G. moves into his new apartment

Home First represents a collaboration of the Philadelphia VA Medical Center (PVAMC), the City of Philadelphia, Horizon House, Inc., Project H.O.M.E., Philadelphia Health Management Corporation, and 1260 Housing Development Corporation/Columbus Property Management. Together, these organizations competed against more than 100 other applicants nationwide; Home First was one of eleven sites selected to receive funding. MIRECC Administrator Vince Kane, LCSW, worked with City of Philadelphia staffers Marcella Maguire, Ph.D., Director of the Chronic Homelessness Initia-

tive, and Rob Hess, Deputy Managing Director for Special Needs Housing, to bring this long-time goal to fruition.

The overall goal of Home First is to provide permanent housing and case management services to Philadelphia's homeless. The program will target 80 persons with a serious mental health or substance use disorder who are chronically homeless, that is, who have been in shelters for 365 contiguous days or on four or more occasions over a period of three years. It is estimated that 25 of those placed in long-term housing as a result of this first ever joint federal initiative will be veterans.

(Continued on page 2)

MIRECC Special Fellowships

Currently seeking post-doctoral psychologist for 2-year fellowship position in Philadelphia

(contact ruckdesc@mail.med.upenn.edu for more information)

Inside this issue:

Educational Offerings 2

New pilot research application process 2

Spotlight on a MIRECC Investigator: Adam Gordon, M.D., MPH 3

Upcoming Events

Soon we will be emailing brochures and registration information for the "Homelessness and SMI: From the Streets to Recovery" conference, to be held on April 27-28, 2004 at the Trump Plaza in Atlantic City, NJ. The 1½ -day conference is a collaboration with MIRECCs in VISNs 3 and 5. Speakers from across the country will discuss innovative intervention models, as well as legal, medical, gender, and psychopharmacological issues.

Join us in Philadelphia for the "Second Annual PADRECC/MIRECC Symposium on Neurodegenerative Diseases: The Interface of Psychiatry

and Neurology." This full-day conference will be held on May 24, 2004, at the Inn at Penn. Speakers from the University of Pennsylvania will be joined by distinguished faculty from Brown University, The Johns Hopkins University, and Emory University. Brochures will be emailed soon.

We currently are planning to conduct two one-day trainings on "Office-Based Treatment of Opioid Dependence," in both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Physicians who com-

(Continued on page 4)

Home First Enrolls First Veteran, continued

(Continued from page 1)

Home First utilizes a “housing first” approach, based on the principle that it is most effective to stabilize homeless individuals by providing them with immediate access to housing and case management services. To test this notion, the ICH grant will fund an evaluation of Home First’s clinical and health services outcomes. The Home First team will compare the costs and benefits of providing permanent housing and long-term support with more traditional models that rely on shelters and crisis services (e.g., hospitalization, detoxification).

The Home First partners in Philadelphia each are responsible for a different aspect of the project: Horizon House will provide care coordination, behavioral health treatment, and case management for non-VA participants; Project H.O.M.E. will coordinate outreach efforts; Philadelphia Health Management Corporation will provide medical services; 1260 Housing Development Corporation will coordinate housing issues (e.g., HUD vouchers); and the PVAMC will provide case management for VA participants and conduct an outcomes evaluation for the project.

The PVAMC team conducting the outcomes evaluation is headed by the MIRECC’s Vince Kane (Principal Investigator), with Kimberly Lewis, B.A., responsible for project coordination and data collection. Kimberly will administer screening measures and track veterans for three years, and will forward Philadelphia data to Robert Rosenheck, M.D., the National Director for the ICH initiative. Future issues of this newsletter will report on the findings of the evaluation.

Educational Offerings

In a follow-up to last fall’s program, Joseph Proietti, M.S., Program Coordinator for the Personality Studies Research Group at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic (WPIC), UPMC Health System, delivered a half-day workshop on “**Training in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Skills.**” Building on last year’s introduction, this session focused on applying DBT skills and running DBT programs. It was offered at the Highland Drive Division of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System.

Also in Pittsburgh, Dennis Daley, Ph.D., Scott Golden, M.D., and Frances Dannenberg, Ph.D., presented **MIRECC Addiction Medicine Grand Rounds** last fall. The panel reviewed issues in the assessment and treatment of patients with co-occurring substance use and psychiatric disorders. They presented a case, interviewed a patient, made brief presentations, and interacted with the audience to discuss key clinical issues in treating patients with comorbidity, especially

the importance of combined psychosocial and pharmacological interventions.

Another **Grand Rounds** presentation in Pittsburgh, a joint effort of WPIC and VA Pittsburgh, reviewed veteran-specific issues for non-VA clinicians. Before a lively and appreciative audience, Antoine Douaihy, M.D., joined the Addiction Medicine Grand Rounds panelists in using a case discussion to review the assessment and treatment of patients with co-occurring substance use and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

In Philadelphia, the MIRECC coordinated the presentation of a VISN 16 MIRECC **satellite series on PTSD and traumatic grief**. Clinicians were invited to view three broadcasts in January and February, addressing “A Stress Reaction Model,” “Treatment of Nightmares and Insomnia,” and “Traumatic Grief Treatment: An Overview,” all offered by national experts on PTSD.

New Application Process for MIRECC Pilot Projects

The VISN 4 MIRECC Pilot Project Fund is designed to promote research that ultimately will enhance the quality of life of individuals with mental illness and comorbid medical and/or substance use disorders. Pending VISN approval, \$100,000 will be available during FY 2004 to support pilot research projects related to this mission. The highest priorities for funding are proposals that support 1) new, unfunded investigators for projects conducted at the VA; and 2) novel and innovative work conducted at the VA by established investigators employed by the VA or its affiliates.

This year, the application process will be modified to require the approval of letters of intent (LOI) by the MIRECC Research Review Committee prior to the submission of full proposals. Letters of intent and full proposals now are being accepted on a monthly basis. **The due date for each is the last Friday of the month** (e.g. 2/27/04, 3/26/04, etc.). Letters of intent will be reviewed within 3 weeks; following approval of the LOI, the full proposal may be submitted at the next application deadline.

As long as the project fits within the

MIRECC’s comorbidity theme, the type of research can range from basic science to clinical trials and health services research. It is expected that successful pilot projects will be developed into VA Merit Award applications, VA career development applications, and/or NIH career development (K) or individual research project (e.g., R01) applications.

Please contact Sara Salmon-Cox (Sara.Salmon-Cox@med.va.gov) with any procedural questions or to request the LOI and proposal application materials.

Spotlight on a MIRECC Investigator: Adam Gordon, M.D., MPH

Adam Gordon, M.D., MPH, is committed to providing services for homeless persons with drug and alcohol problems, on both a volunteer and professional basis. As medical director of two substance abuse facilities in Pittsburgh, Dr. Gordon has created several free care clinics that provide medical services, medications, and case management for underserved populations. As a general internist at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, this calling has enabled Dr. Gordon to bridge clinical, education, and research activities. From his start as a VA general internal medicine fellow and activities supported by the VISN 4 MIRECC, Dr. Gordon’s unique insights into the health needs of underserved populations, particularly those who are homeless or experience substance use disorders, represent a valuable resource for the VISN 4 MIRECC. In addition to the MIRECC, Dr. Gordon is affiliated with the Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion and the University of Pittsburgh’s Center for Research on Health Care. In 2002, he completed certification in Addiction Medicine from the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

Dr. Gordon has been a driving force to enhance research and clinical services to persons who are homeless and experiencing drug and alcohol problems. As a member of the Substance Abuse and Assessment Team at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Dr. Gordon has championed bringing addiction medicine treatment into primary care. In addition, he is a leader in the clinical and educational services provided by the University of Pittsburgh’s Program For Health Care to Underserved Populations.

Born in Illinois and raised in Springfield, Missouri, Dr. Gordon attended Northwestern University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Biological Sciences. He left Chicago for medical school at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, where he began volunteering at free-care homeless clinics around Pittsburgh. Encouraged to continue this service, he stayed at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center for residency in internal medicine. Further encouraged by his mentors, Joseph Conigliaro, M.D., MPH

and Thomas O’Toole, M.D., Dr. Gordon completed a VA-funded general internal medicine fellowship in Pittsburgh. In 2000, he earned a multidisciplinary Masters of Public Health from the Graduate School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Gordon’s thesis work focused on underserved populations and was entitled: “Transitions of Alcohol Use to Rehabilitation: Exploration of Treatment Settings of Alcohol Detoxification.”

Also in 2000, Dr. Gordon joined the faculty of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System and the University of Pittsburgh as an Assistant Professor in the School of Medicine. Clinically, Dr. Gordon continues to be active in the Primary Care Service Line, seeing primary care patients and assisting Dr. Conigliaro in running an active substance abuse consult service. Often, difficult patients who are homeless or with substance abuse issues are referred to his primary care clinic.

Dr. Gordon is active in the community, teaching medical students and residents the art of taking care of homeless persons. As Medical Director of the Salvation Army Public Inebriate Program and the Harbor Light Center, he has personally provided free care for thousands of Pittsburgh homeless persons and annually precepts hundreds of medical students in homeless and substance abuse clinics. This is a very popular volunteer activity with students and for the last two years Dr. Gordon has been a finalist as the “Best Mentor” of medical students at the University of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Gordon’s community service efforts also have been recognized nationally. He was awarded the 2001 AMA Young Physician Community Service Award and the 2003 AMA Excellence of Medicine Award. He was recognized in 2002 as one of a “Dozen Who Make a Difference in 2001” by the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, and received a La Roche College Thanksgiving Tuesday Award for community service leadership, a 2001 Community Champions-Jefferson Award, and an Outstanding Volunteer Service Award, presented at the United Mental Health’s Special Advisory Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs.



Dr. Adam Gordon

Dr. Gordon’s clinical and educational activities complement his research endeavors. His research examines the patient, provider, and system factors that influence processes of care and treatment outcomes for vulnerable populations along the continuum of substance abuse identification to treatment. Dr. Gordon received a VA HSR&D Career Development Award in 2002 to study “Processes of Care of Alcohol Detoxification,” under the mentorship of Dr. Conigliaro and Michael Fine, M.D., M.Sc. Dr. Gordon also received VISN 4 MIRECC funds to study the processes of care in veterans in alcohol withdrawal in the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. He is completing a 2002 MIRECC pilot grant, “Comparisons of Outcomes of Veteran and Community Housing Programs for Vulnerable Homeless Populations” in which he is examining how system factors influence medical and social outcomes for homeless persons.

Dr. Gordon also actively participates in other VA and NIH grants. He serves as the primary evaluator for the “AIM HIGH: Collaboration to Link Health Care for the Homeless Programs and Community Mental Health Agencies” (Department of Health and Human Services) and as a co-investigator for the Veterans Aging Cohort Study: Alcohol Associated Outcomes Among HIV +/- Veterans (NIAAA PIs: Amy Justice, M.D., Ph.D., and Dr. Conigliaro).

In his spare time, Dr. Gordon loves playing and taking long walks with his dog, Cairo, a five year-old German shepherd. He also enjoys renovating his turn of the century house in the Highland Park area of Pittsburgh.